

Remarks

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed October 6, 2004. At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-5 and 7-20 were pending in this application. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-5 and 7-20.

By this amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1,7,8 and 10 and have added claims 21-25 to clarify the subject matter in which the Applicants claim as their invention and to advance prosecution in this case. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. Applicants do not admit that these amendments were necessary as a result of any cited art or Examiner objection. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the above application in view of the following remarks.

New claims 21-25 are the same as claims 1 and 3-6 pending in related application, Serial No. 09/707,109, filed on November 6, 2000, except for further amendments made to claim 21 by this paper to clarify the claimed subject matter. The '109 application and this application both claim the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent App. No. 60/225,123, filed August 14, 2000. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. On August 26, 2004, the Examiner issued a final rejection of claims 1 and 3-6 in the '109 application. Claims 1 and 3-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tatham* (U.S. Patent No. 6,223,177) in view of *Srinivasan* (U.S. Patent No. 5,548,506). According to the Examiner in the '109 application, although *Tatham* does not teach a roadmap, *Srinivasan* does teach a project roadmap with descriptions of physical actions or tasks within a project. Applicants address this ground of rejection in this response with respect to claims 21-25.

Objection to claims 7 and 8

Claims 7 and 8 stand objected to because they depend from a claim which has been cancelled. Applicants hereby amend claims 7 and 8 to depend from pending claim 1. As such, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to remove this objection.

Rejection of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tatham* in view of *Dougherty*

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being obvious in light of U.S. Patent No. 6,223,177 (*Tatham*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,370,575 (*Dougherty*). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because amended claims 1-9 are not taught, disclosed, or suggested by the proposed *Tatham-Dougherty* combination.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to clarify their claimed invention in light of the proposed *Tatham-Dougherty* combination. As amended, at least the following limitations are not taught, disclosed, or suggested by the proposed *Tatham-Dougherty* combination and the other art of record:

- assigning a review authority to one or more of the team members in the pluralities of first and second team members
- transmitting the data to at least one of the one or more team members having review authority for review and approval; and
- receiving approval from the at least one of the one or more team members having review authority prior to associating the data with one or more of the activities.

These steps are supported by the specification as originally filed. For example, the following passage provides support for these steps:

To avoid issue overload, upon raising an issue the team member must assign a reviewer, e.g., a member of the team. The reviewers may be a restricted sub-set of the team members, and for example may be the team leader(s) and/or their delegates. Until the reviewer has reviewed the issue it is not made available to all of the team members nor may it be raised to management.

Page17, ll. 1-6.

The proposed *Tatham-Dougherty* combination does not teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed steps for providing review and approval of data transmitted by team members prior to associating the data to one or more activities. *Tatham* provides for a

localized, private office suite with application software required to permit group activity within the office. Col. 4, ll. 25-27. *Tatham* does not teach, disclose, or suggest defining a team room within a virtual team room environment having a review and approval process. *Dougherty* provides for a web-based status/issue tracking system based on parameterized definition. *Dougherty* does not teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed review and approval process. For at least these reasons, claim 1 and depending claims 2-5 and 7-9, are patentable over the proposed *Tatham-Dougherty* combination and the other art of record.

**Rejection of claims 10-20 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable
over *Tatham* in further view of *Thackston***

Claims 10-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tatham* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,295,513 (*Thackston*). Applicants kindly request reconsideration of the pending claims because the proposed *Tatham-Thackston* combination fails to teach, disclose, or suggest various features of the pending claims.

Applicants have amended claim 10 to clarify their claimed invention in light of the proposed *Tatham-Thackston* combination. As amended, at least the following limitations are not taught, disclosed, or suggested by the proposed *Tatham-Thackston* combination and the other art of record:

- the team room user profile includes review authority for one or more of the team members in the pluralities of first and second team members;
- transmitting the data to at least one of the one or more team members having review authority for review and approval; and
- receiving approval from the at least one of the one or more team members having review authority prior to associating the data with one or more of the activities.

The proposed *Tatham-Thackston* combination does not teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed steps for providing review and approval of data transmitted by team members prior to associating the data to one or more activities. *Tatham* provides for a localized, private office suite with application software required to permit group activity within

the office. Col. 4, ll. 25-27. *Tatham* does not teach, disclose, or suggest defining a team room within a virtual team room environment having a review and approval process. *Thackston* is limited to providing a "system and method for undertaking an engineering design and development effort in a virtual collaborative environment." Col. 1, ll. 19-24. *Dougherty* does not teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed review and approval steps. For at least these reasons, claim 10 and depending claims 11-20, are patentable over the proposed *Tatham-Thackston* combination and the other art of record.

New claims 21-25

New claims 21-25 are patentable over the prior art of record. Claims 21-25 are directed at a method of providing communication and collaboration among team members and non-team members. At least the following limitations are not taught, disclosed, or suggested by the art of record:

- assigning a review authority to one or more of the team members in the pluralities of first and second team members;
- transmitting the data to at least one of the one or more team members having review authority for review and approval; and
- receiving approval from the at least one of the one or more team members having review authority prior to associating the data with one or more of the activities.

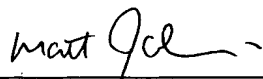
Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that the Office Action of October 6, 2004 has been fully responded to. Consequently, in view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully submitted.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew M. Jakubowski, Attorney for Applicants, at Examiner's convenience at (248) 358-4400.

Fees are due for five new claims, one independent and four dependent claims. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fees associated with the additional claims and any additional fee or credit any overpayment in connection with this filing to Deposit Account No. 06-1510 (Ford Global Technologies, Inc.). A duplicate of this notice is enclosed for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: 11/29/04

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